

Editorial

On behalf of the Editorial Board of the journal, I would like to welcome you to the final issue of Volume 13 of the *Social Work & Social Sciences Review*. This is the first time I have written here in my capacity as the incoming Editor and particular thanks are given to Elizabeth Harlow, our colleague from the University of Salford for all her hard work and patience over the past several years. Elizabeth Harlow remains a member of the Editorial Board and her support at this time of change has been invaluable. There have been some changes to the composition of the Board, with some members standing down after long service with the journal. Our appreciation of their contribution to the life of the journal and thanks for the services they provided over the years is extended here.

This edition contains articles from across the globe including Canada, Denmark and Finland. The journal has always been internationally focused in its content and it is our intention that contributions from countries outside the UK will be both encouraged and promoted. To that end we have retained members on the Editorial Board who can offer support and context-relevant advice to potential writers outside the UK. If you are thinking of writing for the journal please feel free to contact myself or another member of the Board to discuss your ideas. You will find the names of all the members of the Board on the opposite page, and you will notice that several members are located outside the UK and act as ambassadors for the journal in their home countries and they will be happy to hear from you. We have found that this is especially important for those whose first language is not English and who may value advice about translation and preparation of articles. We recognise that there are immense difficulties publishing in English only journals and we would hope to encourage you to submit articles by providing support in these issues.

The articles in this issue cover a wide range of topics relevant to the journal's overall aims and to the needs of our readers. Bringing up children is widely acknowledged as difficult and complex for all parents and especially so for families with children with disabilities. Alice Home considers the challenges faced by social workers who support families where policy is outcome driven and research and practice writing has a tendency to pathologise behaviour and focus on 'negative parental outcomes rather than their learning or agency'. Her community-based research with mothers with children with ADHD looks at the rewards and challenges of parenting children with 'invisible disability' and raises some pertinent and important points in her discussion, including the implications of the findings for social work practice.

The theme of agency is also highlighted in Riitta-Liisa Kinni's paper which examines the social work role in multi-professional work with older people. Collecting narrative data through interviews with professionals involved with one particular service-user

(who was also interviewed) she demonstrates the marginalisation of the 'social' within a hospital context and draws our attention to the different ways that the needs of the service-user are constructed and are in contrast to the views of the service-user herself. Her work is based on a study in Finland but her reflections on interprofessional working and the issues of power and agency have resonance for social work in many other places and contexts.

Lars Uggerhoj presents a paper which asks us to consider the questions which still abound about the nature of knowledge for social work practice and, as in the previous article, raises issues about dominant forms of knowledge and power. 'Creativity, fantasy, role-play and theatre in social work: A voice from the past or steps for the future?' also examines issues of power and the voice of the service-user in social work practice and offers alternative ways of understanding social work interventions and interactions which involve the use of techniques drawn from drama and theatre. He argues that social work needs to match the complexity of the professional task with diversity and reflection in methods, in practice and research.

These articles, while tackling a range of issues, and methodological and practice dilemmas have a common thread of putting the service user at the heart of what we do and using our knowledge to empower service-users (and ourselves as practitioners and researchers) in order to deal with the complexity and context of continuous change within which we function. For myself I believe that it is this context of change and diversity which provides such fruitful grounds for our potential knowledge creation and development which should be both celebrated and exploited more fully. I would like to see this journal take on a more dialogic turn in the future, by providing space for comment and reflection on the papers we publish. Social work is a critically reflective profession and discipline and can only benefit further through opportunities for debate and constructive criticism, which will refine and sharpen our thinking and our conceptual understandings. I invite readers to respond to articles in respectful and thoughtful ways in order to promote this dialogue.

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Since I began in my role as Editor, the Board has reviewed the editorial policy and we are hoping that some of the changes we have made will make the journal more accessible to both writers and readers and extend both our readership and the number and range of contributions we receive. We have revised our advice to contributors to allow for shorter articles (between 2500 and 3500 words) which will encourage new writers to raise issues for discussion and to introduce new and important conceptualisations, ideas and practice to our readers. We have also extended our word limits for longer articles and will now accept articles between 4000 and 6000 words in length to allow for in-depth reporting of research and major reviews. These limits are flexible and so if an article of interest and value to our readership is submitted which does not conform to these advisory limits, they will be considered purely on merit. We want to

encourage the submission of a wider variety of papers from a range of contributors, including those from practitioners, service users and others involved in the social work and social sciences worlds. Particular details of these changes to our policy can be found in the 'Notes for contributors' section, are also available on the website at: <http://www.whitingbirch.net/cgi-bin/subscribe?showinfo=ip015;from=ig01>.

Taking on the responsibilities of a journal such as *Social Work & Social Sciences Review* has raised all sorts of questions for me as the incoming Editor. What, and for whom, are such journals produced? The function of a journal such as this, in my view, has to be more than just playing the publishing game for academics. More than just seeing one's work in print and meeting targets for publication set by our institutions. In a practice related discipline such as social work, research and scholarly activities have to be purposeful and relevant to practice so articles which are of direct benefit for practice and practitioners are essential to all involved and this journal has a role to play in disseminating such work. This is especially so in current times when the world of social work practice is becoming, paradoxically, both smaller in terms of our ability to communicate and learn from each other across the globe via sophisticated communications (and publishing) technologies and at the same time, subject to changes (often rapid) in policy, practice and procedures in response to the demands and requirements of both governments and societies. It is therefore equally important, that we develop and share theories, conceptual frameworks and philosophical debates about the nature of social work to provide the tools for practice and to critically analyse the changes and the challenges we face in providing services. This journal has a strong role to play in publishing new ideas, new ways of thinking about what we do and the impacts and outcomes of our intervention. It also has a duty to keep a watchful eye on new developments and to mount a robust and grounded critique of the changes and demands faced by social work in the 21st century. To this end, we welcome contributions from colleagues who are applying a range of social sciences perspectives to the subject and practice of social work in all its diverse shapes and forms.

Social work has many stakeholders: there are many different groups and individuals who have an investment or interest in social work as both a range of practices and as an academic discipline. The journal would like to encourage contributions from all those who have an interest, whether it be as providers or commissioners or users of services, or those whose research interests coincide with the needs of the profession and the discipline. This diversity and range is one of the key strengths of social work and should be more widely represented and disseminated in our journals as it can only promote and increase the level and variety of debate that is needed to sustain and enhance our academic and practice development.

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The next issue of *Social Work & Social Sciences Review* will mark a change in editorial policy and hopefully strengthen the role that the journal has played over a considerable

number of years in ensuring that current thinking in research and practice is brought to the attention of our readers. We hope that you will contribute to the journal through submissions and also make good use of its content by reading sharing and generally encouraging others to do the same. Electronic publishing should widen access to a range of materials that have formerly been the preserve of the academic world and I hope the journal will play a key role in both stimulating academic debate and in providing the knowledge and evidence base for practice. Please make use of our contact details to get in touch if you have either an article (or an idea for one) to submit for publication, or if you can contribute to making sure that our readership grows.

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